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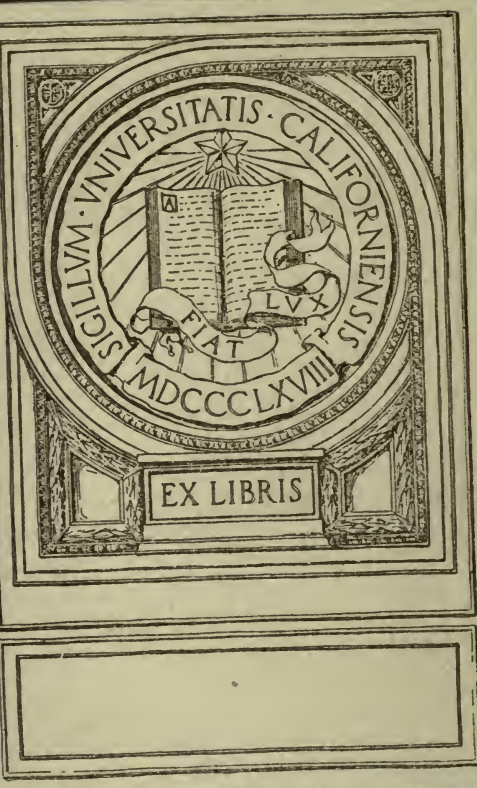
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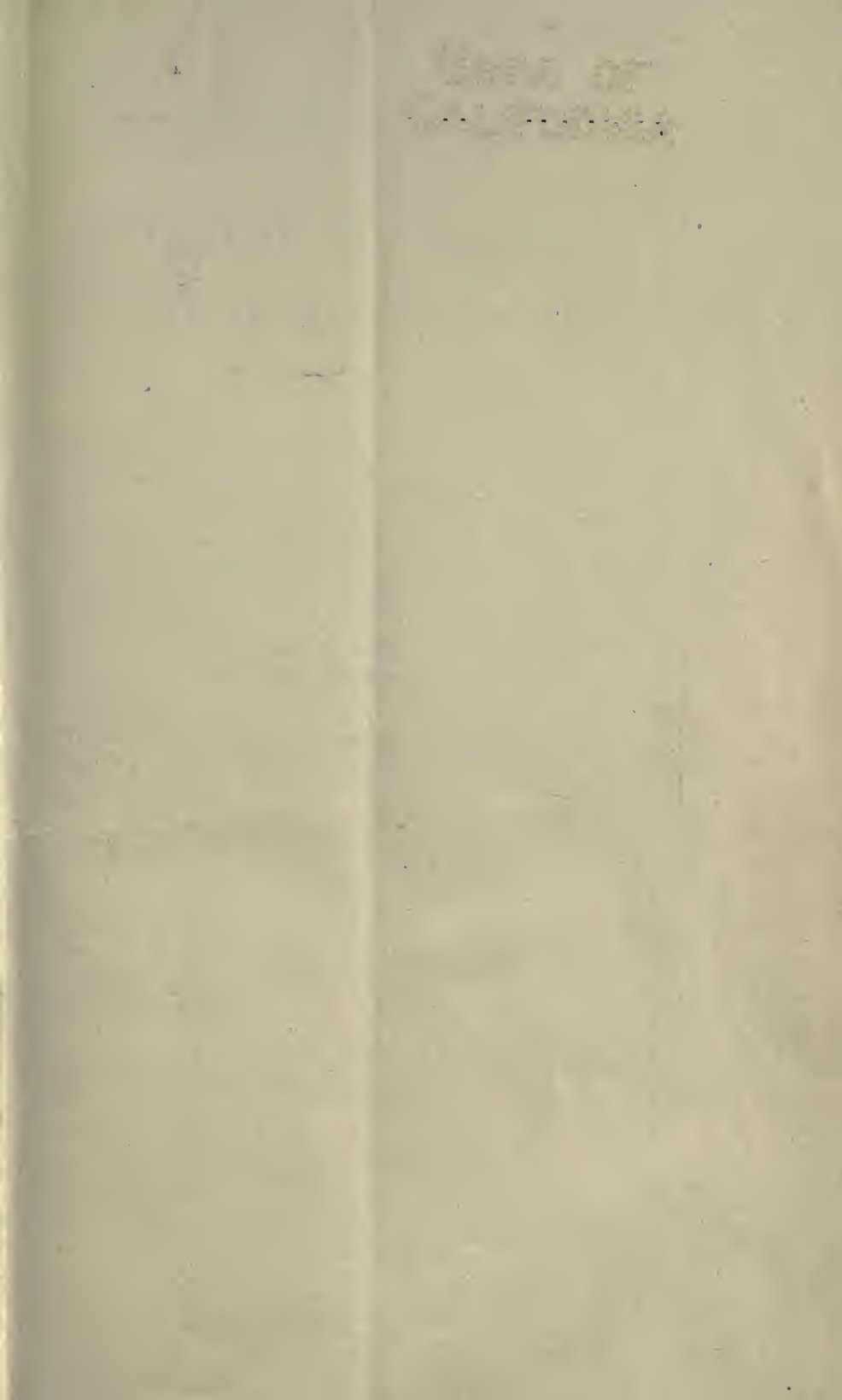
Civil Service Administration

By LEONHARD FELIX FULD,
LL. M., Ph. D.
Sometime Assistant Chief Examiner, New York
Municipal Civil Service Commission

*Although the Success of a Municipal Administration in New
York May Depend Upon Its Police Administration, Its Efficiency
Will Always Depend Upon Its Civil Service Administration*

NEW YORK: BY THE AUTHOR
1921

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE—THE CIVIL SERVICE FUNCTION.....	3
Section One—The Past.....	3
Definition	Scope
Free Appointment	Effect
History	Development
Section Two—The Present.....	6
Cooperation	
Scope of Examinations	Service Records
Improper Assignments	
Kinds of Examination	
Physical Examinations	Character Examinations
Practical Tests	Experience Tests
Oral Tests	Non-Competitive Examinations
Non-Assembled Tests	
Section Three—The Future.....	14
Relations with Mayor	
Permanent Commission	
Relations with Heads of Departments	
Budgetary Problems	Transfers
Discipline	Dismissals
Assignments	
Relations With Employees	
Assistance	Service Instruction
Standardization of Examinations	Recreation
CHAPTER TWO—THE EXAMINING DIVISION.....	24
Section One—Organization	24
Chief Examiner	
Assistant Chief Examiner in Charge of Examinations	
Executive Duties	Recommending Examinations
Planning Duties	
Assistant Chief Examiner in Charge of Rating	
Assistant Chief Examiner in Charge of Salaries	
Examiners	
Advisory Board	
Clerical Assistance	
Section Two—Functions	32
Anticipating Needs of Service	Non-Assembled Examinations
Fixing Conditions of Examinations	Character Investigation
Medical Examinations	Service Records
Written Examinations	Non-Competitive Examinations
Practical Examinations	Promotion Examinations
Oral Examinations	
Section Three—Methods	42
Labor Turnover	
Critical Study	Methods
Anticipating Needs of Service	
Medical Examinations	
Practical Examinations	
Oral and Non-Assembled Examinations	
Substitutes	
Experience Ratings	
Factors	Qualitative Rating
Library	Standardization
Service Instruction	Fairness
Progress of Examinations	Service Records
Control of Salaries	Planning of Work
Promotion Examinations	Specialization
CHAPTER THREE—THE CHIEF EXAMINER	59
Importance of Position	
Qualifications	
Relation to Commission	
Relation to Departments	
Office Management	
Conclusion	

CHAPTER ONE

The Civil Service Function

SECTION ONE—THE PAST.

DEFINITION. Civil service administration has in the past been that branch of the public service which has jurisdiction over the selection of civilian employees required to carry on the public business. In most cases these employees have been selected by means of competitive tests. With the recent introduction of service records, the recent development of promotion examinations and the prosecution of efficiency studies, the sphere of the civil service administration has been gradually enlarged, and when the present day interest in salary classification, in service instruction and in centralized disciplinary control has been crystalized into legislation, civil service administration will include most of the activities which in private life are comprehended within the field of employment management.

FREE APPOINTMENT. (1) In the history of public administration, the era of the free uncontrolled appointment of subordinates preceded the era of civil service administration. When the public officer was free to appoint his own subordinates, he carried full responsibility for the acts and the character of the employees selected by him (2). This principle of the uncontrolled power of appointment and unlimited responsibility would have been found practicable and satisfactory but for the fact that this branch of public administration became infected at an early day by what has been

(1) The footnotes contain references to books and periodicals where the reader may find a more detailed account of matters treated briefly in this monograph. These references have been taken from the author's unpublished Civil Service Bibliography.

(2) The Law of Officers, *Law Students' Helper*, 1905.

called by President Gilman the *Bacillus Tennesseensis* (3) and what is commonly called the spoils system. Under this system which was introduced into the national government by President Andrew Jackson, all of the subordinate positions in the public service were filled by persons of the same political party as the head of the Government, both for the sake of securing loyalty and for the purpose of rewarding faithful party service. The spoils system limits the power of free appointment to almost as great an extent as the civil service administration, but since this power is not legally controlled in any manner under the spoils system, it becomes burdensome to the executive and wasteful to the government.

HISTORY. In the historical development of civil service administration, there were three stages, the qualifying examination, the non-competitive examination and the competitive examination. The qualifying examination system, under which no person may be appointed until he has been found qualified to perform the duties of the position which he seeks, is based upon the principle that if a man is merely worthy of a place he may be appointed, even though there are better qualified men seeking the same position. Some advocates of this system even seriously contended that public places were gratuities to be distributed equally and that justice required that better men be excluded in some cases in order that inferior men might be appointed. The qualifying examination was based upon the motto of *detur digno* (4).

The qualifying examination was first displaced by the non-competitive examination. Under this system the qualifications of persons nominated for examination by the appointing officer are graded by a board of examiners. This is essentially a compromise system, since it retains the principle that no person may be admitted to the examination unless designated by the appointing officer. It is also a distinct advance since it recognizes that the probability of appointment is influenced as well by the personal worth of

(3) The Launching of a University, *Gilman*, p. 342.

(4) United States Revised Statutes, *Sec.* 164 [1853].

the applicant as by the law of the appointing officer. Its motto is *detur dignior* (5).

At the present day the fundamental principle of civil service administration in the case of all positions to which it is believed applicable is that of *detur dignissimo*, which assumes that since the public service is the work of the people it is to exist exclusively for the benefit of the people, who are entitled to the appointment of the employees of the best talent and the highest character obtainable by open competition. Under this system, if there is such a thing as a right to public employment, that right belongs first to the most worthy (6).

SCOPE. The development of the civil service administration in New York City has been gradual. The first civil service statute excluded from the operation of the civil service law not only elected officials and persons nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Aldermen, but also all employees of the Police, Health, Fire, Education and Law Departments, as well as persons required to furnish bonds for the safekeeping of public funds⁷.

By the next statute there were exempted in addition to elected officials and employees of the Department of Education, only heads of departments, employees having custody of public funds and those for whose errors a public official may be financially responsible⁸. At the present day only elected officials, employees of the Board of Aldermen and of the Board of Elections, heads of departments, and superintendents, principals and teachers in the public schools are exempted from the operation of the civil service law in the City of New York⁹.

EFFECT. The civil service administration provides a democratic, economical and scientific solution of

(5) United States Revised Statutes, Sec 1753 [1871].

(6) Police Administration, p. 79.

⁷ Laws of New York, 1883, chap. 354.

⁸ Laws of New York, 1884, chap. 410.

⁹ Laws of New York, 1909, chap. 15., sec. 9, *Consolidated Laws*, chap. 7, sec. 9.

the problems of personnel connected with municipal administration. It is democratic because its activities give an equal chance to all, irrespective of race, creed, color, previous condition or political affiliation. It is economical because it makes certain that every appointee is competent to perform the duties of the position which he seeks, instead of leaving the testing of the fitness of applicants to an appointing officer who may be either unable or unwilling to perform this function. It is scientific because it provides for the performance of the city's business a staff of expert workers with a permanent tenure during good behavior.¹⁰

DEVELOPMENT. A fourth attribute is being slowly engrafted upon the civil service administration; that attribute is that it is becoming practical. Until a comparatively recent date the civil service administration cherished a spirit of aloofness. It based its tests upon academic subjects closely correlated to the curricula of schools and colleges. It sought to test the applicants' general education and mental fitness. In its practical development it is making its relation and its co-operation with appointing officers closer day by day. Its tests are becoming more and more tests of the applicant's fitness to perform the duties of the position which he seeks rather than educational tests. Its efforts are being directed to correlating its tests to the duties of the position to be filled instead of to the curricula of schools and colleges.

SECTION TWO—THE PRESENT.

CO-OPERATION. At the present time the Civil Service Commission¹ seeks to co-operate with appointing officers to the fullest extent, consistent with the integrity of the examinations and with absolute fairness to all candidates. This co-operation has been developed principally in the planning of

¹⁰ *The American City, a Problem in Democracy*, Wilcox, p. 298.

¹ Whenever the phrase, "The Civil Service Commission," is used in this paper reference is made to "The Municipal Civil Service Commission of New York."

the scope of examination, in the establishment and maintenance of service records and in the correction of improper assignments.

SCOPE OF EXAMINATIONS. Whenever the Civil Service Commission receives from a department a request to hold an examination an examiner is assigned by the chief examiner to make an investigation of the duties of the position and of the qualifications which the incumbent should possess. This investigation includes also the observation by the examiner of employes occupying similar positions in the municipal service and in private life, and inquiries among municipal officials, private employers and the examiners who prepared and the examiners who rated the preceding examination for the same position with a view to availing himself of their experience in the preparation of his report². The entire scope of the examination, including both the preliminary requirements demanded for eligibility for examination and the subjects of the examination, is discussed with the appointing officer, care being exercised by the examiner to give the appointing officer no information regarding the questions to be asked or the tests to be used in the actual examination.

SERVICE RECORDS. Uniform records of the efficiency and punctuality of all employes in the competitive class³ in each department of the municipal government are prepared three times a year by the supervising officials of each department in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission⁴. Before being submitted to the Civil Service Commission for approval these

² Employment Methods in the Public Service, *Industrial Management*, May, 1917.

³ The classified civil service of the city is divided into four classes: Exempt, labor, non-competitive and competitive classes. [Laws of New York, 1909, chap. 15, sec. 12; *Consolidated Laws*, chap. 7, sec. 12].

⁴ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Regulation XIII*.

records are reviewed by departmental bureau or inter-bureau committees and by the Personnel Board of each department. An examiner of the Civil Service Commission is assigned to attend each meeting of the Personnel Board of the department to which he is assigned and as many of the meetings of the bureau committees of his department as he may deem necessary or as may be practicable. By the attendance of an examiner at the meetings at which the service records are prepared and reviewed the Civil Service Commission seeks to assist the departments in the performance of this duty required under the Civil Service rules⁵ and incidentally it is enabled to secure greater uniformity in the rating practice of the various departments by the presence of this expert in service record rating at these meetings.

IMPROPER ASSIGNMENTS. The Civil Service Commission must take cognizance of the improper assignment of an employe which is brought to its attention⁶. If a department were permitted to assign a laborer, who obtains his position by reason of the priority of his application without any test of his fitness to perform the duties of a janitor, this would not only enable a department to nullify the purpose and spirit of civil service administration, but it might also endanger the interests of the public if an untested and incompetent employe were assigned in this manner.

The correction of these improper assignments involves much tact and astuteness. If the Civil Service Commission in its efforts to refrain from interfering with the internal administration of the departments refers such complaints to the department affected for investigation and report, the appointing officer will seldom admit that the assignment is improper. If an investigator of the Commission is assigned to make the investigation and the Civil Service

⁵ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Rule XV*, clause 22.

⁶ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Rule II*, clause 5.

Commission takes action upon his report, there is grave danger of conflicts between the Commission and the department affected, both because of the department's resentment of outside interference and the possibility that the investigator may fail to understand fully the attitude of the department in each case. By ordering an independent investigation of each case by its own investigators and submitting the essential facts of the investigator's report to the appointing officer for comment before taking action upon it, the Civil Service Commission is enabled to carry on this activity for the proper enforcement of the Civil Service law with a maximum of friendly co-operation and a minimum of resentment and friction with appointing officers.

KINDS OF EXAMINATION. In the history of civil service administration all tests were at first written tests, exclusively, and these tests were closely correlated with the work of the educational institutions from which the applicants were recruited. These early civil service tests were tests of the applicants' general education and this is the principle upon which the civil service tests in Great Britain and in some of the cities and states in this country are based. In New York City, however, the object of the civil service tests is to measure and to grade on a competitive scale the fitness of the applicants to perform the duties of the position which each seeks. It is apparent that written tests are not always the best tests of such potential fitness.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS. In the case of firemen and similarly, though not to as great an extent in the case of policemen, physical strength is of more importance than mental ability. In the case of applicants for these two positions, and a few similar positions, the greatest emphasis is placed by the Civil Service Commission upon the medical and physical examination. In the actual administration of these examinations, more than half of the candidates are rejected in the physical examination and very few of those who qualify in the physical examination fail

to qualify in the written tests. An elaborate system of medical and physical examination, including a large number of strength tests rated on a competitive scale has been adopted to test applicants for these positions. This physical examination for policemen and firemen is undoubtedly the most comprehensive physical examination in the United States, with the possible exception of the physical examination of applicants for the United States Army Aviation Corps⁷.

Every applicant for a position in the competitive class is given a medical examination by the Civil Service Commission, both for the protection of the employes already in the service from infection and to make certain that the applicant possesses the physical ability to perform the duties of the position which he seeks. These medical tests are graded in four groups, ranging from the first group consisting of a simple medical inspection and a test of vision in the case of clerical positions, the incumbents of which require the least degree of physical ability and incur no physical risk, through the second and third groups, consisting of a more thorough medical examination in the case of positions in the inspectional service and the labor class, which require respectively a moderate degree of physical ability, such as would enable an incumbent to walk long distances, and a high degree of physical ability such as would enable the incumbent not only to perform severe manual labor, but also to care for himself in accidents, to the fourth group which comprises the most comprehensive medical, physical and strength tests for positions in the police and fire service⁸.

PRACTICAL TESTS. For positions which require of their incumbents motor activities in place of or in addition to ideo-motor activities, a written test is not an adequate test of fitness. For such positions the written test is sup-

⁷ Police Examinations, *American Physical Education Review*, 1908.

⁸ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Physical Standards*, 1916.

plemented or supplanted by a practical test. Gardeners are given a practical test in the use of tools, in transplanting and in their familiarity with trees and shrubs. The written civil service examination is supplemented in the case of inspectors of plumbing by a practical test in the wiping ✓ of joints, in the case of stationary engineers by a practical test in the operation of an engine, in the case of pilots by a practical test in the navigation of boats, in the case of nurses by a practical test in first aid work and the care of the sick and in the case of playground attendants by a ✓personal demonstration in a playground. Not only are these practical tests, either alone or in conjunction with written tests a better measure of the applicant's ability to perform the duties of the position sought, but they also overcome one of the most common criticisms of the opponents of civil service administration that success in such tests depends entirely upon literary ability, irrespective of the needs of the position sought.

ORAL TESTS. The written examination is sometimes supplemented by an oral test in cases in which the Civil Service Commission feels that the personality of the applicant, his resourcefulness, his influence upon the public and upon subordinates, his tact, his quickness of mental reaction and his personal force and magnetism are very important elements in determining his suitability for appointment to the position which he is seeking. These tests are also ✓sometimes used in an attempt to place a correct value upon the quality of an applicant's experience.

NON-ASSEMBLED TESTS. For high grade positions for which the Civil Service Commission desires to obtain as applicants the best qualified men and women throughout the United States and in which it is feared that persons eminent in their respective fields would be reluctant to come to New York for an assembled written examination, a non-assembled examination is sometimes held. These non-assembled examinations are of two kinds. For the highest grade of positions the non-assembled test consists of a

statement of the applicant's professional experience, submitted by each applicant in full detail and graded on a competitive scale by the examiners. For other positions of a high grade each candidate is required to prepare a thesis on an assigned subject and to submit it to the Civil Service Commission for rating within a specified time. When such a thesis is required an experience paper and an oral test are usually made a part of the non-assembled test. The principal function of the experience paper which contains a detailed account of each applicant's professional training and experience is to bar from the examination those who are obviously unfit and to grade the experience of the applicants on a competitive scale, while the principal function of the oral test is to grade the personality of each applicant.

CHARACTER EXAMINATIONS. All applicants for positions in the competitive class are subjected to a careful character investigation before their names are placed upon an eligible list. The purpose of this character investigation is to detect any misstatements which the applicant may have made in the statement of his business experience on the experience paper rated as one of the subjects of the examination and to disclose any events in the applicant's life which would tend to reflect unfavorably upon his usefulness as a municipal employe. This investigation is conducted principally by means of an oral interview of the applicant by an investigator and by correspondence with the applicant's former employers. These routine procedures are supplemented when necessary by personal field investigation.

This character investigation should be clearly differentiated from the oral tests. The result of the character investigation is either the confirmation of the applicant's standing on the eligible list or his removal from the eligible list and the placing of his name on the list of persons disqualified for the public service. The oral test on the other hand is a part of the examination conducted by the examiners of the Civil Service Commission in which each

applicant is given a competitive rating, forming one of the elements that determine the applicant's relative standing on the eligible list.

EXPERIENCE TESTS. For most positions other than those of a clerical nature no application is accepted by the Civil Service Commission unless it shows that the applicant has had practical experience in work of the kind for which he is applying or in other work tending to fit him for this position, of a quantity and a quality which in the judgment of the examiners is sufficient. This preliminary experience requirement fulfills two useful purposes. It makes certain that every applicant has had practical experience and not merely obtained his knowledge of the subject from books, and it reduces the waste incident to the rating, in these widely-advertised examinations, of the papers of hundreds of applicants who are certain to fail in the written examination because of lack of previous experience. The experience paper, which gives the life history of the applicant on a single sheet, is rated on a competitive scale and those who fail to receive the passing mark of seventy per cent. which is given to those meeting the minimum requirements of the announcement of the examination are rejected⁹.

NON-COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS. There are thousands of positions in the municipal service outside of the competitive class which it is not practicable to fill by means of competitive examination, either because the salaries are too low, because the conditions of employment in penal or charitable institutions are undesirable, or because the tenure of the employe is too short. Most of these positions are in hospitals and prisons, and they may be divided into two general classes. The first class consists of positions, the salaries of which are very small, or the tenure of the incumbents of which is very short¹⁰, and the second

⁹ See advertisements of examinations in *New York City Record*.

¹⁰ Not more than four months [*Rule XII*, clause 3].

class consists of positions requiring some professional or practical experience, which are sought principally for the incidental training received by the incumbents. In the case of positions properly falling within the non-competitive class, the Civil Service Commission has found it impracticable to conduct any examination of the applicants in most cases. With the exception of the lowest paid employes of this class who are usually former inmates of the institutions in which they are serving, the Civil Service Commission makes a careful investigation of the character of each applicant and also makes certain that those employes who are by law required to possess certain educational or license qualifications actually possess the qualifications required by law.

SECTION THREE—THE FUTURE.



RELATIONS WITH MAYOR. The members of the Civil Service Commission are at present normally appointed by the mayor¹ who has the power to remove at his pleasure any civil service commissioner appointed by him.² Under these provisions of the law each mayor at the commencement of his term of office usually appoints three civil service commissioners of whom two are usually of his own political party. These men have generally had no previous experience in civil service administration and as the term of the mayor is four years they never serve more than four years unless they are reappointed by a succeeding mayor.

The disadvantages of this system are that there is no continuity of administrative policy in the Civil Service Commission; that at the beginning of each municipal administration when the most important civil service problems must be considered all of the commissioners are inexperienced; and that although these commissioners de-

¹ Laws of New York, 1901, chap. 466, sec. 123, *New York Charter*.

² Laws of New York, 1909, chap. 15, sec. 11; *Consolidated Laws*, chap. 7, sec. 11.

cide questions of a quasi-judicial nature which are of the greatest importance to the efficiency of the municipal government and the welfare of thousands of municipal employes who have life positions in the city service during good behavior, the mayor is able by the use of his power of appointment and his power of removal of these civil service commissioners to influence their action almost completely in accordance with whatever his own policies may be.

PERMANENT COMMISSION. To secure a fearless and impartial administration of the civil service law the Civil Service Commission should be semi-independent of the mayor and to secure an efficient administration of the law it should be a permanent body of public officials possessing continuity of administrative policy. These results may be accomplished by providing for a board of three members, not more than two of whom shall belong to the same political party, each of whom shall have a six-year term and one of whom shall be appointed by the mayor every other year. Under such a system the Civil Service Commission would always have two experienced members, the mayor would only control one member of the commission at the commencement of his term of office when the most important civil service problems are usually decided and would not control a majority of the commissioners until the second half of his administration. The two experienced members of the Civil Service Commission would not only insure continuity of administrative policy but would also be able to educate the new member introduced into the Commission every second year.³

It is not desirable to advocate the appointment of the civil service commissioners by a central state authority such as the governor or the state civil service commission because the civil service function is so important that it should be left within the realm of local home rule as far as practicable. Civil service commissioners should, how-

³ Civil Service Law for Cities, sec. 1, National Civil Service Reform League, 1912.

✓ ever, not be removable at the pleasure of the mayor; they should be removable only after a trial on charges before a judicial authority such as the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. The greater security of tenure which such a provision of the law would guarantee would be certain to result in a more fearless and more impartial civil service administration in the city.

RELATIONS WITH HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS.

It was only ten years ago that the writer received from the late chief examiner the instruction to disregard in the preparation of examinations all suggestions of appointing officers since such suggestions were in his opinion generally made for the purpose of defeating the spirit of the civil service law. Although the Civil Service Commission no longer maintains this position of aloofness there are many respects in which its relations with appointing officers may be improved for the betterment of the service. The provision of the rules that no employe of any municipal department shall act as an examiner⁴ should be retained and every precaution observed at present to safeguard the integrity of the examinations from improper influence or interference by any officer or any employe of a municipal department should be zealously guarded. But after strengthening these bulwarks all the efforts of the Civil Service Commission should be directed to extending to appointing officers all possible expert assistance in problems affecting the personnel of their respective departments.

✓ BUDGETARY PROBLEMS. A representative of the Civil Service Commission should confer with the head of each department each year when that official is engaged in preparing his annual budget and give to that official every possible assistance in the solution of the personnel problems which present themselves for solution at that time. When new positions are created the method of filling them, by the assignment of employes already in the department,

⁴ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Rule 3*, clause 3.

by the transfer of employes from another department, by the promotion of employes in the department or by the appointment of a new employe as the result of a competitive examination, should be carefully considered and arrangements made to carry out the wishes of the head of department without unnecessary delay, if these wishes are not in violation of the civil service law.

No new position should be created in an annual departmental budget or at any time during the year unless the title of such position has first been approved by the Civil Service Commission. The present procedure whereby such titles are suggested by the Bureau of Personal Service and established by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment and by the Board of Aldermen without consultation with the Civil Service Commission frequently results in the creation of administrative perplexities and individual hardship to employes which could be easily avoided by submitting such new titles to the Civil Service Commission for approval before they are established.

DISCIPLINE. Employes in the municipal service frequently suffer serious injustice by reason of their unjust removal from the position which they hold. Such removal may be accomplished either by a dismissal after charges have been preferred and an opportunity given to the employe to make an explanation or by the abolition of the position held by the employe and the placing of his name on a preferred eligible list. Although it is believed that such cases of injustice are not **greater** in number in the municipal service than in private life and are probably fewer, those who are familiar with the enormous labor turn-over in private employment will realize that even though smaller in number such cases of unjust removal exert a most baneful influence upon the *esprit du corps* of the municipal employes, because of their greater average intellectual ability.⁵ Municipal employes resent the fact that

⁵ Improved Improved Disciplinary Methods for Employes, *American Industries*, May, 1916.

✓ after competing with hundreds or thousands of applicants in open competition for the position which they hold and succeeding in obtaining the position in such open competition, the whim or caprice of one supervisor after they have performed the duties of the position to the satisfaction of several supervising officials, may result in the dismissal after the formality of an opportunity to explain the charges preferred against them.

The privilege granted by statute⁶ is regarded by the employes as a mere formality because the head of a department is the sole judge of the facts adduced at the hearing and because his decision is final and not reviewable by any administrative or judicial authority. The employes furthermore resent the fact that the head of department acts both as prosecutor, through his subordinate the immediate supervisor of the employe affected, and as judge. They argue that an impartial decision is seldom obtained under such a system in which the judge is not a disinterested impartial student of the facts adduced at the hearing.]

ASSIGNMENTS. The problem of the treatment of the personnel under civil service administration is further complicated by the provision of the rules requiring the assignment of employes to duties appropriate to their respective titles.⁷ Although this provision of the rules is necessary to prevent the nullification of the spirit of the civil service law it sometimes hampers an appointing officer who wishes to retain an incompetent employe in a position the duties ✓ of which he is competent to perform. A superannuated inspector may be utilized as an attendant in a plan room, a sick laborer may be able to perform the duties of a clerk or an inefficient law clerk the duties of a court stenographer.

The proper treatment of the labor turnover involves also the readjustment of thousands of square pegs in round holes by the reassignment of these employes to duties for which each appears to be better fitted. Since such reassign-

⁶ Laws of New York, 1901, chap. 466, sec. 1543 *New York Charter*.

⁷ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Rule II*, clause 5.

ments are frequently not permitted by the civil service rules, the head of department must either retain inefficient employes in their present positions which is unjust to the department or dismiss them from the service, which may work hardship upon the individual employe.

TRANSFERS. The Civil Service Commission should undertake a careful study of the labor turnover in the municipal service, with a view to reducing it to a minimum and with a view to co-operating with appointing officers to a larger extent in the solution of their personnel problems. It seems likely that by a careful study of the causes leading to the unsatisfactory service performed by some employes in the municipal service the Civil Service Commission may be able to undertake to advise these employes regarding positions in other departments of the city government for which they are better fitted and to which they may either be transferred without examination or for which they should seek to qualify by means of examination.

Such a study of the municipal labor turnover would undoubtedly result in greater municipal efficiency, it would certainly result in economy by saving to the municipality the loss which it suffers whenever a trained municipal employe leaves the service and it would probably greatly improve the morale of the municipal service by pointing out desirable readjustments in assignments and lines of promotion to those employes who need such assistance.

DISMISSALS. If mal-adjustments in the municipal service are readjusted by means of transfers and promotions after a careful continuing study of the municipal labor turnover, the number of dismissals and lay-offs in the municipal service will be very greatly decreased. Even if in all of these cases of dismissal just grounds existed for such dismissal, it would be desirable for the sake of the influence upon the morale of the personnel to improve the system whereby such dismissals are effected. Many private employers who have given most careful thought to the problems of personnel have in the interests of economy and effi-

ciency decided that no employe should be dismissed by any foreman or superintendent and that dismissals may be made only by the personnel director. Unless heads of department in the municipal service are willing to delegate the power of dismissal to trial boards on which the employes are represented,⁸ the most efficient control would probably be one exercised by the Civil Service Commission.

An administrative control is preferable to a judicial control because the attitude of the courts frequently does not give full consideration to the administrative problems involved in each case of dismissal. If all dismissals are made on the recommendation of a trial board, on which the Civil Service Commission acting in the capacity of director of personnel is represented, and the majority of the members of which are not connected directly with the appointing officer of the department in which the employe is serving, the conflicting demands of administrative efficiency and of justice to the individual employe can readily be reconciled.

RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYES. The Civil Service Commission to reach its highest efficiency must in all of its relations with employes be the fountain head of justice. The most pleasant remembrance of the writer's years of service with the Civil Service Commission is the unanimity with which all employes had implicit faith in the impartiality of our late chief examiner.⁹ Whether expressed in the words of a civil engineer, "He is absolutely fair and impartial," or in the words of a policeman, "He is dead on the level; he would turn down his own brother," this characteristic is the foundation upon which a successful administration of the civil service in its relation with employes must rest.

ASSISTANCE. But this quality of impartiality and fairness though of the greatest importance is only a negative virtue. While it protects the municipal employe from grave abuse, and while it is the keystone of civil service

⁸ Improved Disciplinary Methods, *Survey*, April 29, 1916.

⁹ Frederick Guion Ireland.

administration, more positive assistance should be rendered by the Civil Service Commission to municipal employees. Municipal employees who are dissatisfied with their present positions should be able to obtain assistance from an employee of the Commission in their efforts to better their condition. A careful study of these requests for assistance should be made by an employee assigned to that duty because of his sympathy, his tact, his investigative ability and his sound common sense.

Assistance in securing assignments in their own department for which they are better qualified than for their present assignments; pointing out opportunities for transfers to other departments; outlining courses of instruction for promotion in cases in which the promotion examinations are standardized and sample questions of previous examinations are available for distribution; the stimulation of ambition which may be called healthy discontent and the subjugation of the spirit of insubordination which may be called unhealthy discontent are a few of the services which such an employee of the Civil Service Commission can render to municipal employees in distress.

Every private employer who has established a grievance hour has found it a most valuable investment of his time. The municipal service, because of its wide extent and the greater absence of the personal element as compared with even the largest of private organizations is peculiarly in need of the services of such an employee assigned to the study of grievances and to the assistance of employees in distress.

STANDARIZATION OF EXAMINATIONS. As the Civil Service Commission prepares the examinations by which entrance into the city service and promotion in the city service are effected, it is the body of the municipal government which should assume responsibility for the formulation of the service instruction for municipal employees. It is debatable whether the Civil Service Commission should co-operate actively in the formulation of courses of study

for entrance into the city service, both because there is greater danger of complaint that the integrity of the examinations is being impaired and because it is questionable whether this department of the municipal government should actively influence men and women to choose the city service as a life career.

There can be no question, however, that the Civil Service Commission should formulate courses of service instruction for those in the municipal service who seek promotion. To fulfill this function the Civil Service Commission must standardize its principal promotion examinations, so that those who are preparing for promotion may know in advance exactly what ground should be covered by them in their preparation. It should also standardize some of its entrance examinations in such a manner as to render it practicable to obtain for positions the incumbents of which can learn their duties quickly without any large amount of training or experience, persons of no experience at much lower salaries than experienced persons would demand. Provision may be made for the deficiency by service instruction for the employees during their probationary or apprenticeship period.

It should be borne in mind that standardization of examinations does not necessarily involve stagnation in examination procedure. If an examination has been standardized these standards may be changed at any time that the need for such change is felt, but until changed the old standards must be followed. In a progressive and enlightened civil service administration changes in standards will be of comparatively frequent occurrence.

SERVICE INSTRUCTION. In the field of service instruction courses in typewriting should be prepared to qualify office boys and junior clerks for the position of typewriting copyist; courses in elementary shorthand to qualify clerks and typewriting copyists for the position of stenographer; courses in advanced shorthand to enable stenographers to review the principles of their art and to

increase their speed; courses in English composition for stenographers and clerks to give them assistance in practical letter-writing and report-writing; and courses in arithmetic to prepare employes for those clerical promotion examinations in which arithmetic is a subject. Similar courses of instruction should be formulated for employes in the accounting service and the engineering service of the city.

For some branches of the inspectional service courses of service instruction would greatly increase the efficiency of the employes, but in view of the small opportunities for promotion in rank in this service the attendance at these courses would probably be small unless such attendance is taken into consideration when advancements in salary are granted. The courses of service instruction to which reference has been made will result not only in increased efficiency of the personnel but also in greater contentment and ambition resulting from such advancement and promotion. By providing courses of service instruction for positions the incumbents of which can learn their duties rapidly without previous special experience or education, the city will save the large difference between the salaries demanded by experienced workers and those paid to inexperienced workers during their period of service instruction. This will be a large saving because in most of these positions the tenure of the employes is very short.¹⁰

RECREATION. The Civil Service Commission should also in connection with its work in the field of service instruction make provisions to enable municipal employes to obtain relaxation and healthful exercise with a minimum of inconvenience and a maximum of benefit. Courses of instruction in swimming, in dancing, in light gymnastics and in the elements of self-defence, together with noon-hour lectures on personal hygiene and allied health topics will be found to interest a large number of employes and to be a source of considerable benefit to them in increasing

¹⁰ Service Instruction of American Corporations, *U. S. Bureau Education Bulletin* 34, 1916.

their physical efficiency upon which their working ability depends to such a large extent.¹¹

Saturday afternoon excursions to municipal institutions in outlying sections of the city, particularly when such excursions include a boat ride to and from the institution serve incidentally as a delightful relaxation while increasing the employes' knowledge of the activities of the various municipal departments.¹² Provision may also be made by the Civil Service Commission in co-operation with the Commissioner of Health to provide an annual medical examination for all municipal employes who wish to avail themselves of this privilege and to provide medical attention and advice for those employes who may require it.

CHAPTER TWO

The Examining Division

SECTION ONE—ORGANIZATION.

CHIEF EXAMINER. The chief examiner has charge of all matters pertaining to the preparation for and the conduct of examinations.¹ His duties may be divided into four broad classes—consultative, supervisory, planning and routine. The function to which he is obliged to devote most of his time is the consultative function. He is required to confer with and to give expert professional advice to civil service commissioners and to appointing officers on all technical subjects relating to the personnel of the municipal government. Most of his supervisory powers over the members of the examining staff may be delegated by him to the assistant chief examiner in charge of rating, but sufficient control should be retained by him, at all times to enable him to assume conscientiously the responsibility imposed upon him of taking care that accuracy, uniformity and justice are secured in their proceedings.

¹¹ Recreational Activities for City Employes, *Modern City*, July, 1917.

¹² The writer has demonstrated the practicability of providing such service instruction and opportunities for recreation for municipal employes by planning them unofficially outside of office hours during the last four years with success.

¹ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Regulation II.*

Most of the planning functions may be delegated by him to the assistant chief examiner in charge of examinations but the chief examiner should personally make all assignments of examiners to the preparation of examinations and to the rating of papers, both for the purpose of securing centralized control and for the purpose of securing centralized responsibility. The routine functions of the position which include the examination and transmission to the commission of all reports of examiners and the auditing of all bills of the examining division are enormous in quantity but of comparatively small importance. An efficient chief examiner will delegate the endorsement of most of these reports to his secretary and will delegate to her also the duty of interviewing the members of the public calling at his office and the duty of furnishing to the members of the examining staff such information as she may be able to give, with a view to saving his own time for more important duties.

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXAMINER IN CHARGE OF EXAMINATIONS. The assistant chief examiner in charge of examinations should be in charge, under the direction of the chief examiner, of all of the work connected with an examination until the candidates' papers have been delivered on the day of the examination to the custodian for assignment for rating. His duties may be divided into two broad classes—planning and executive. An efficient assistant chief examiner will devote most of his time and efforts to his planning duties, delegating most of the details of his executive duties to competent assistants. In this way he will find it necessary to devote only so much time to these duties as will enable him to make certain that all the details of the conduct of the examinations are properly attended to.

EXECUTIVE DUTIES. For the performance of his executive duties the assistant chief examiner in charge of examinations must be a master of details. This means that with a minimum expenditure of his own time he must be

able to make certain that competent subordinates attend faithfully and properly to the thousands of important details connected with the conduct of written, practical and oral civil service examinations, in some of which more than four thousand candidates compete in a single session. The selection, assignment, training and direction of the monitors, the purchase, delivering and distribution of the stationery, the printing and expeditious distribution of the question sheets, the admission and seating of the candidates, the maintenance of discipline in the examination room and the prompt and equitable disposition of hundreds of questions affecting the rights of candidates and the integrity of the examination which arise in the examination room, as well as the preparation of detailed reports of each examination² and the renumbering of the candidates' examination papers and their transportation and delivery to the custodian in charge of such papers are some of the details which must be attended to daily by this officer, while he is obliged to devote the major portion of his time to his planning duties at his desk and in the field.

These duties would call for executive ability of the highest order if the assistant chief examiner could attend to these details personally; when he is obliged to delegate these duties to subordinates because his own time must be devoted to the performance of his planning functions at his desk they require the very highest grade of executive capability.

✓ PLANNING DUTIES. The planning duties of this assistant chief examiner are of more importance than his executive duties from the point of view of the amount of time devoted to them, their importance to the examining division, and the experience, knowledge and ability required for their efficient performance. When the municipal departments prepare their annual budgets in the summer of each year, these budgets must be examined by this assistant chief examiner with a view to ascertaining the probable

² New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Regulation II*, clause 5.

needs of the departments for new eligible lists and with a view to anticipating their needs by holding and completing the necessary examinations before the beginning of the next calendar year. He must also plan the work of the examining division for the following year with a view to furnishing to the chief examiner the work data required by him to prepare his own annual budget.

Although extraordinary conditions which could not be foreseen will undoubtedly interfere each year with the carrying out of the work plan prepared by this assistant chief examiner during the preceding summer the formulation of such a plan of work is of great value to the supervising officials of the examining division and is indispensable to the chief examiner in the preparation of his own annual budget containing the annual appropriations of the examining division for the ensuing year.

RECOMMENDING EXAMINATIONS. Whenever there is a vacancy in the municipal service and there is no appropriate eligible list for this position, the appointing officer may designate a person for non-competitive examination. If upon such non-competitive examination the person designated is found to be qualified, he may be appointed and employed until an eligible list for this position has been prepared, subject to the limitation contained in the law that no person may serve under the provisions of this rule for a longer period than four months.³

By an examination of the departmental budgets in the summer of the preceding year the examinations for positions required on January first may be held and rated during the preceding months of October, November and December; by a careful continuing study of the action of those municipal bodies having the authority to create new positions during the year examinations for such newly-created positions may be initiated at the same time that proceedings for their establishment are initiated with the result

³ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Rule XII*, clause 3.

that the period of service of the temporary incumbent under this provision of the rules will be shortened; by a careful check and analysis of the progress of the certification of existing eligible lists a new examination will in almost every case be recommended by this assistant chief examiner in such good season that the new list will be ready for certification before the old list is exhausted.

In connection with the recommendation of each new examination this assistant chief examiner must also make the necessary investigation to enable him to determine the proper subjects of the examination, the weight to be attached to each subject, the training and experience to be required of each applicant and the other terms and conditions of eligibility. In the case of promotion examinations, he must similarly fix the subjects and weights and the terms and conditions of eligibility. The advertising of the examinations in newspapers and periodicals, and by the mailing of notices to persons and institutions that can assist in bringing each examination to the attention of desirable qualified applicants, as well as the preparation and distribution of sample questions should also be attended to under the direction of this assistant chief examiner.

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXAMINER IN CHARGE OF RATING. The duties of the assistant chief examiner in charge of rating should be strictly supervisory in the narrower sense of that word. This assistant chief examiner should be responsible for the supervision and direction of the work of the examiners and other employes of the examining division. These duties include the recommending to the chief examiner of examiners available for assignment to work; the recommending to the chief examiner of persons competent and willing to act as expert examiners; the examination, correction and revision of rating keys; the consideration of appeals of candidates and of the examiners' reports on these appeals, the fixing of standards and the supervision of the rating of candidates in the non-

competitive class⁴ and in the labor class, and supervision over the library, the computing room, the record room and the vault containing examination papers in the course of being rated.

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXAMINER IN CHARGE OF SALARIES. The duties of the assistant chief examiner in charge of salaries should include the investigation of departmental requests for additional employes, for increases in the compensation of employes and for the creation of new positions; recommendations for the fixing of the titles and the salaries of new positions and for increases in the compensation of employes; the maintenance of a uniform service record system in all departments and the application of this system in connection with requests for advancement and promotion; the investigation of complaints of improper assignments and such other duties relating to personnel problems in the municipal service as may be assigned by the commission.⁵

EXAMINERS. The examining staff should consist of senior examiners, examiners, assistant examiners, expert examiners and per diem examiners. Each of the principal functions of the work of the examining division should be in charge of a senior examiner—a person who by training, by experience and by personal qualifications is able to assume entire responsibility for a single activity of the rating division's work. A senior examiner may be assigned to civil engineering work, one to mechanical engineering work, one to police examinations, one to examinations in the fire department, one to the accounting service, one to the attendance service, one to promotion examinations and one to each of the other principal groups of city departments. In making these assignments, the individual capa-

⁴ Principally minor institutional positions.

⁵ Most of these duties are performed at present by the Bureau of Personal Service of the Board of Estimate and Appointment; they should, however, be transferred to the Civil Service Commission, which is the personnel department of the municipal government.

bility of each examiner should be carefully considered, and in the appointment of new examiners the needs of the service with reference to particular activities should also be considered. As many examiners should be assigned to work under the guidance of each senior examiner as may be needed for the performance of the work of that branch of the examining division.

Per diem examiners are men engaged in private business, who have qualified in a competitive examination for the position of examiner and are given rating assignments to be performed at their residence or place of business at such times as the volume of high-grade work in the examining division is so large that it cannot be handled by the regular examiners. Expert examiners are persons of eminence in their respective professions who are appointed to assist the regular examiners of the Civil Service Commission in the preparation and rating of an examination for a position requiring exceptional qualifications of a scientific, professional or educational character, which no examiner in the regular employ of the commission is able to grade. For the rating of low grade papers, such as spelling papers, memory tests, simple arithmetic papers, copying papers and the like, assistant examiners may be employed at a lower rate of compensation than is paid to regular examiners.

ADVISORY BOARD. Before being submitted to the Civil Service Commission for adoption and publication, the advertisement of each competitive examination and the terms of eligibility of each of the more important promotion examinations, together with the report of the examiner who prepared the advertisement or terms of eligibility are carefully considered by an advisory board consisting of the president of the commission, the secretary of the commission, the chief examiner, the assistant chief examiners, and such other examiners as may be designated by the Commission.⁶ These announcements of examina-

⁶ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Rule III*, clause 3.

tions are scrutinized, criticised and amended by this board, which also considers critically before adoption by the Commission all changes and improvements in examining and rating methods.

CLERICAL ASSISTANCE. It is of the utmost importance that adequate clerical assistance be provided for the examining division in the interests of economy as well as in the interests of efficiency. The chief examiner should be provided with a private secretary who should be relieved of all routine stenographic duties and who should devote her entire time to relieving the chief examiner of the many details of routine which would otherwise occupy too much of his valuable time. A progress clerk in the chief examiner's office should devote her whole time to the keeping of the record of progress of each examination, the preparation of weekly progress reports, the daily work records of the examiners, and the furnishing of progress slips to the chief examiner to initiate the next step in each examination.

Each of the assistant chief examiners should have a secretary assigned to his office to relieve him of as many of the routine details as she may be able to attend to herself, such as interviewing the public and the preparation of routine reports and correspondence without dictation. The examining division should also have a centralized stenographic bureau with as many stenographers as the needs of the division may require for assignment not only to the chief examiners and the assistant chief examiners, but also to the senior examiners and such of the other examiners as may require their services. There should also be an adequate force of office boys to attend to the minor clerical work and the errands in the division in order that the valuable time of the members of the examining staff may not be frittered away in the performance of duties which may be attended to equally well by employes receiving a lower salary.

SECTION TWO—FUNCTIONS

ANTICIPATING NEEDS OF SERVICE. One of the most valuable indicia of the efficiency of the civil service administration is the number of persons serving without competitive examination pending the promulgation of a competitive eligible list.¹ Although it is true that even under the most efficient administration such provisional appointments cannot be entirely prevented, yet a properly organized and well supervised examining division will reduce the number of such provisional appointments to a very low minimum.

The needs of the service on the first day of each year when the new budget goes into effect may be anticipated by holding the necessary examinations during the last three months of the preceding year, since the budget is adopted in the autumn of the preceding year. Similarly although the establishment of a new department with a large number of new positions requiring incumbents possessing specialized knowledge and experience cannot be foreseen by the civil service commission, no examining division can offer any valid excuse for failing to have eligible lists for such positions as office boy, stenographer and typewriter and the like, available at all times for certification.

A careful study of the progress of certification of the existing list will enable the examining division to recommend a new examination in ample time to anticipate the needs of the service. Unusual conditions such as the inadequacy of the salary offered by the city or extraordinary demands for employes of a particular class in private life may be solved by the examining division before the existing list is exhausted.

FIXING CONDITIONS OF EXAMINATION. Before the subjects and weights and other conditions of eligibility for a competitive examination or for an important promo-

¹ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Rule XII*, clause 3.

tion examination are recommended by the examining division there should be a thorough field investigation of the duties of the position to be filled, of the salary offered and of the qualifications required for similar positions in other branches of the public service and in private employment. The time spent in such investigation is well invested. The co-operation of appointing officers should be sought. Although their suggestions cannot always be adopted they will generally be found helpful and when they must be disregarded this is due more frequently to their lack of expert knowledge of personnel problems than to any conscious effort on their part to influence the examiner improperly.

In the formulation of the conditions of eligibility and of the other conditions of the examination, the utmost simplicity and liberality consistent with the maintenance of the efficiency of the service should be adopted. Liberality should be encouraged in the formulation of these conditions to make certain that no qualified applicant will be excluded and simplicity is desirable not only in the interests of economy since it is cheaper to rate a simple examination than an elaborate examination, but also because elaborate examinations frequently bar from the service some of the most desirable applicants. A study of the methods of employment managers in private life will often be of much suggestive value in this connection, because, although civil service examinations are usually models of thoroughness and completeness, private employment methods frequently contain valuable suggestions of adequate simplicity.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS. Every applicant for a position in the municipal service should be given a medical examination which is sufficiently thorough to make certain that he possesses the physical qualifications required for the position which he is seeking. These medical examinations should be graded according to the nature of the physical qualifications required. In every case the medical examiner should make certain that the applicant is free from

communicable disease, which would make the applicant a menace to other employes in the municipal service. In every case also the medical examiner should make certain that the applicant's vision is sufficiently good to enable him to perform efficiently the duties of the position which he seeks.

In the case of positions which require of the incumbent a larger degree of physical ability—as, for example, in the inspectional service or the skilled trades service—a more comprehensive medical examination is indicated, and similarly a more thorough examination is necessary when the position sought is a hazardous one within the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Law.² The question of pensions is not of importance at the present day as affecting the medical examination both because city employes do not enjoy any pension privileges which require protection by the medical examination of recruits into the city service, and because in any pension law which may be enacted, it is likely that a minimum period of service will be required which will effectually safeguard the interests of the city against recruits who are not physically sound.

✓ These medical examinations are almost invariably non-competitive in character, every person who succeeds in qualifying being admitted to the remainder of the examination on an equal footing. In the case of applicants for appointment on the uniformed police and fire forces, however, it is well to add tests of strength and to rate them on a competitive scale, because of the importance of physical strength and ability, in these two forces.

WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS. The conduct of written examinations was the first activity of the examining division and it is still its most important function. The written examination is the fairest of all tests. The candidate is given plenty of time to deliberate and to answer the questions in his own way. The identity of the candidate is completely concealed from the examiner, thus insuring ab-

² State of New York, *Laws of 1916*, chapter 622.

solute impartiality. There is, furthermore, a complete record of the candidate's performance in the examination open to the inspection of the applicant and to the inspection of any other interested person in the discretion of the Commission.

It is claimed that written examinations have some serious defects. It is contended that many competent employes possess greater manual skill than literary ability and that for positions requiring manual skill a practical test is preferable to a written examination. It is contended that for many positions the personality of the applicant is of greater importance than his knowledge and ability, and that for positions of this kind an oral test is preferable to a written examination. It is contended that for many positions of the highest grade persons eminent in their respective professions will not compete in an assembled, written examination and that for positions of this kind a non-assembled examination should be held. The merits of each of these arguments will be considered, but in connection with these arguments the great advantages of the written test should be borne in mind—absolute impartiality, ease and freedom of the applicant and full record of the proceedings.

PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS. Practical examinations are frequently held to supplement or to supplant the written examination in cases in which motor activities rather than ideo-motor activities are required of the incumbents of the position which the applicants seek. For positions the incumbents of which may be efficient even though almost illiterate, the examination should consist of a practical test only. Examples of such positions are those of gardener, stationary engineer and most of the positions in the skilled trades service. For positions the incumbents of which are engaged in highly specialized motor activities to a large extent, it is desirable that the written test be supplemented by a practical test. Examples of such positions are those of gymnasium attendant, swimming instructor, pilot, inspector of plumbing and the like.

It should be borne in mind that although the absolute impartiality of the written examination is lost in the practical test in which the candidate and the examiner come into close personal contact and although the ease and freedom of the applicant is sacrificed in a test in which immediate performance in the presence of the examiner is required, practical tests in the case of the classes of positions mentioned are almost an exact reproduction of the duties required in the daily performance of duty. It is also possible to keep a record of the proceeding which will indicate to any competent reviewer whether the applicant has been justly rated. In many cases it is also practicable to preserve the results of the applicant's performance in the practical test during the period in which he may present an appeal for a re-rating.

ORAL EXAMINATIONS. Oral examinations are held to supplement the written examinations for positions requiring force, strength of character, a pleasing personality and quickness of mental reaction. The examiners rate the applicant on the impression which he makes upon them in the oral interview. Applicants frequently do not present their normal appearance at these oral tests. Although a stenographic record of the oral test is sometimes preserved, this record possesses little value in the consideration of appeals, since the standards of rating in oral tests cannot be definitely formulated and the rating is largely impressionistic. Oral tests lack the absolute impartiality of written examinations, the candidates possess the least ease and freedom at these tests and it is almost impossible to preserve adequate records of the work of the examiners. ✓

Oral tests, even when conducted with the greatest care, ability and impartiality are regarded with suspicion by the applicants, because of the indefinite standards of rating, the direct contact with the examiners, the absence of complete records, and the ease with which they may be manipulated without possibility of detection. Although oral tests may be necessary in the case of a position for which per-

sonality is the principal qualification, as, for example, some positions in the diplomatic service, the recommendation of an oral test should be withheld in all cases in which the needs of the service may be adequately fulfilled by other tests which are conducted on a definitely standardized basis and which are regarded more favorably by the candidates and by the general public.

It is believed that for many positions of an administrative character, for which oral tests are at present held, a qualitative valuation of the applicant's experience will be found a satisfactory substitute. An applicant who has filled other important administrative positions successfully may safely be assumed to possess the personality and the force required for the administrative position for which the examination is being held.³

NON-ASSEMBLED EXAMINATIONS. The non-assembled examination should be recommended only in those cases in which the needs of the service require that an examination be thrown open to citizens of the United States who are not residents of the State of New York and in which there are reasonable grounds for believing that qualified applicants will be reluctant to compete in an assembled written examination. In the actual administration of examinations it will be found that these non-assembled examinations will be required most frequently for medical positions of an administrative character, for which the number of qualified applicants is small and resident in institutions scattered throughout the United States. For positions of this kind in which training and experience are believed to be sufficient to qualify for appointment, an experience paper giving the applicants' training and experience in detail for rating on a competitive scale will be found adequate and sufficient. In cases in which the position for which the examination is held requires peculiar administrative ability in the solution of a novel and difficult administrative problem, the applicants may be required to submit

³ See Section 3 of this chapter, *infra*.

a thesis on this administrative problem within a specified time.

In non-assembled tests the identity of each candidate is hidden; the ease and freedom of the applicants is not only preserved, but is increased to a greater extent than in written examinations and there is a complete record of the proceedings. An element of danger is, however, introduced by the fact that the theses are prepared without supervision and that there is no certainty that each is the work of the applicant himself. It is on this account that the non-assembled test should not be employed in cases in which the Civil Service Commission believes that an assembled test will attract sufficient competent applicants for the needs of the service.

CHARACTER INVESTIGATION. All applicants for employment in the municipal service should be given a thorough character investigation, whether they are appointed in the competitive class, the non-competitive class or the labor class. This investigation should include not only an investigation of the applicant's police record, if any, but also a critical study of his employment record. The character examination is a valuation of the applicant's moral fitness and moral fitness in the broadest conception of that term is of at least equal importance and probably of greater importance than physical or intellectual fitness. When experience is one of the subjects of the examination, such a character investigation is absolutely essential to protect the honest applicant from the attempts of the unscrupulous applicant to overstate his experience. In every case, however, each applicant should be given a thorough character investigation by a trained character investigator.

SERVICE RECORDS. Service records are required in the municipal service because under the law promotions are based in part upon the superior qualifications of the person promoted as shown by his previous service.⁴ The

⁴ State of New York, Laws of 1909, Chapter 15, Section 16, *Consolidated Laws*, chapter 7, section 15.

keeping of such service records constitutes one of the most difficult problems of civil service administration. The ratings should be made in each case by the administrative officer most closely in touch with the work of the subordinate rated; this officer will generally be the bureau or division chief. They should be reviewed by a bureau committee in the case of a department having several rating officers within a bureau and by inter-bureau committees in the case of departments having many bureaus employing persons under the same title.

The service records should be approved by the personnel board of the department consisting of not less than three superior officers or employes of the department. A representative of the civil service commission should be present at each meeting of the personnel board and of the bureau and inter-bureau committees, to give expert assistance to these boards and committees. Employes should have the right to inspect their efficiency or service records and to appeal to the departmental personnel board and to the civil service commission for a revision of their ratings. The service records of each department should be critically examined by the civil service commission upon their receipt in the office of the commission and the commission should retain the right to modify any service rating which according to the investigation of its examiners appears to be unjustified. In each case of this kind an opportunity to be heard should be given to the department affected, before the record is modified.⁵

Employes are at present being rated upon the quantity of their work, the quality of their work and their personality, and they may suffer deductions for lateness, absence and misconduct. Seven grades are provided on the factors of quantity of work and quality of work—far above standard, conspicuously above standard, above standard, standard, below standard, conspicuously below standard, and far below standard, to which the percentages 44, 41, 38, 35, 32,

⁵ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Regulation XIII*.

29 and 26 have been attached respectively—and three grades of above standard, standard, and below standard, with percentages of 12, 10 and 8, respectively, have been fixed for the factor of personality. Whenever a rating other than a standard rating is given to an employe a full statement of the facts in support of such discriminating rating must be given on the standard record form. Each committee and each board which reviews the service records has power to modify such rating upon stating the reasons for its action in writing.⁶

NON-COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS. The non-competitive examinations conducted by the civil service commission may be divided into two classes—examinations ✓ of temporary appointees pending the promulgation of a competitive list, whose tenure cannot exceed four months⁷ and examinations of applicants for positions in institutions for which the commission has found competition impracticable.⁸ In the case of nearly all non-competitive examinations the applicants are not assembled for a written test; they are rated on a detailed statement of their education and experience. For temporary positions the same quality of experience is usually demanded as is required for permanent appointment to the same position, but not as great a quantity of experience is insisted upon. In the case of a few clerical positions the applicants are assembled for a written test.

Institutional positions in the non-competitive class may be divided into two classes—minor positions, the salaries of which are very low,⁹ the incumbents of which are generally former inmates of the institution, in which the changes of personnel are extremely frequent, and over which the civil service commission exercises no control other than the re-

⁶ See Service Record blank of New York Commission.

⁷ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, Rule XII, clause 3.

⁸ New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, Rule XVIII, clause II.

⁹ Usually \$120 a year.

quirement that notice of each appointment and resignation be sent promptly to its office; and the more important positions in the non-competitive class in the case of which the civil service commission not only rates the experience of the applicants but also investigates the character of each applicant. Definite standards are formulated for each position and applicants who fail to meet these standards are rejected. In addition, the civil service commission makes certain that each applicant possesses the educational requirements and the license qualifications required for the position which he seeks.

PROMOTION EXAMINATIONS. In all promotion examinations the seniority of the applicant and his service record is given a weight of fifty points and the other fifty points are assigned to the written examination. In the clerical service the written promotion examination consists usually of four papers—questions on elementary city government, questions on the duties of the department in which the applicant is employed, the writing of a letter on a subject related to the duties of the applicant's department and some arithmetical problems for the lower grade positions and questions on business methods for the higher grade positions.

It is difficult to prepare a written promotion test for clerks whose duties are so varied and who require so little technical knowledge in the performance of their duties. It is believed that the more alert and efficient clerks will know more about the duties of their own department and of the other departments of the city government by which they are employed, than the less efficient clerks. The arithmetic test is included to gauge the general education of the lower grade clerks and a knowledge of business methods is of distinct practical value in the case of the higher grade clerks.

For the higher grade stenographers the exercise in the preparation of calendars of correspondence and the exercise in the formulation of replies to letters without dicta-

tion constitute a practical test of their ability to perform secretarial duties. For all positions outside of the clerical service the applicants in promotion examinations are generally given practical questions relating to the duties of the position which they seek.

SECTION THREE—METHODS

LABOR TURNOVER. The labor turnover is the change in personnel brought about by hiring and by the termination of employment. One of the ablest employment specialists² has estimated that in private life it costs about \$73.50 to break in a new semi-skilled operative and that the entire cost to the employer of securing, hiring and adjusting a new employee to the organization is frequently as much as \$500. [3] If the cost of the labor turnover is so large in private life where the work of the employment department is comparatively simple and inexpensive, and where many employees are engaged in non-specialized work, it is evident that it is probably much larger in the civil service, where the examining methods are complicated and expensive and where most of the positions are highly specialized or at least sharply differentiated from similar activities in private life.

CRITICAL STUDY. Mere percentage figures of the labor turnover mean comparatively little. A 250 per cent. labor turnover in a laboring force which is recruited by means of an elementary medical examination and which is engaged in non-specialized manual work is of less importance than a 50 per cent. turnover in a force of gymnasium attendants recruited by means of elaborate physical, written, practical and character tests and requiring considerable experience before reaching a standard grade of efficiency

(1) This section has been devoted to the presentation of specific recommendations for the improvement of the work of the Examining Division.

(2) Magnus Alexander.

(3) How to Reduce Labor Turnover. *Annals American Academy Social and Political Science*, LXXI, No. 160, p. 17.

in the municipal service. Whether the turnover is due to faults of the departments, to defects in the law, or to unsuccessful methods employed by the examining division of the civil service commission cannot be ascertained unless a critical study of the turnover is undertaken and prosecuted by the civil service commission. Unless such a study is undertaken the work of the commission will always be carried on in accordance with the notions of the members of the executive and the supervising staff and in accordance with the fads, fancies and foibles of the appointing officers of the departments, instead of in accordance with the principles which may be deduced from the actual experience of the municipal service.

METHODS. The prosecution of such a critical study of the municipal labor turnover is neither expensive nor troublesome. An inquiry blank may be sent to each person leaving the municipal service by resignation, transfer or dismissal, asking for a statement of the cause of separation and offering to treat this reply as confidential. When deemed necessary these replies may be followed up by a personal interview, by correspondence with the head of department or by further field investigation. Similar statistics should be compiled from the records of the certification bureau regarding all appointments in the municipal civil service.

These statistics of entrances and exits from the municipal service should be tabulated monthly on a turnover form and a report containing a critical analysis of these statistics should be submitted to the civil service commission monthly for its action in improving its own examining methods and in recommending such remedial legislation as may be found necessary. The standard form in use by private organizations⁴ will be found satisfactory for use in the municipal service after a few headings have been changed to adapt the form to the municipal needs. The

(4) See the two-page Labor Turnover Form, published by the *Library Bureau*.

improvement of the methods of the examining division from month to month should be based upon this critical analysis of the statistics of the city's labor turnover.

ANTICIPATING NEEDS OF SERVICE. The most elementary principle of employment management is that which demands that the needs of the service be anticipated by the employment department. For the civil service commission to be unable to certify at any time competitive eligible lists for such positions as female stenographer or first grade clerk is inexcusable. By a careful analysis of the budgets when they are being prepared in September of the preceding year, by a careful following up of the work of the municipal authorities engaged in the creation of new positions throughout the year and by a careful check upon the work of the certification clerk of the commission in the use of existing eligible lists, the civil service commission will always be able to hold examinations promptly and certify within a reasonable time competitive eligible lists for nearly all positions in which vacancies may occur from time to time.

Existing eligible lists may be divided into two classes,—active lists and inactive lists. The certification clerk should report monthly to the assistant chief examiner in charge of examinations the number of names remaining on active eligible lists and should report quarterly or semi-annually in the same manner regarding inactive eligible lists. By such a system of budget analysis and control of certification all of the ordinary needs of the municipal service may be anticipated or promptly met by the civil service commission.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS. All of the medical examinations of the civil service commission with the exception of those for the police service and the fire service are non-competitive in character and rudimentary in nature. It seems therefore to be a waste of the candidates' time and an unnecessary expenditure of the time of the commission's medical examiners to give a separate non-competitive examination of this kind to every candidate each time that he

applies for a position in the competitive class. Frequently the same person takes two examinations of this kind in a single day, many persons take several examinations of this kind in a month and hundreds take half a dozen or more of these examinations in a year.

Since these examinations are non-competitive in character it would seem entirely proper that a person who has passed the medical examination of a specified physical group should be entitled to compete in the competitive mental examination for any position in this group within a specified period of six months or twelve months without submitting to the same medical examination again. Appropriate certificates may be issued to carry this recommendation into effect. It is believed that this procedure would not only result in a saving of the candidates's time and a saving of the time ✓ of the commission's medical examiners, but would also serve as a means of establishing in the minds of city employees, who constitute the majority of applicants for positions in the competitive class the desirability of taking each year the medical qualifying examinations of all the physical groups and of developing in this manner the periodical physical examination habit which is of such great importance in the maintenance of their physical efficiency throughout life.

PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS. Practical tests in which a complete record of the performance of each candidate is permanently preserved are an excellent measure of the applicant's ability to perform the actual manual work of the position for which he is applying. The only objection to their use is the fact that the identity of ✓ the candidate is completely revealed to the examiner. The integrity of the examination may be effectually safeguarded by the appointment of high grade expert examiners and by the permanent preservation of a complete record of each candidate's performance. The use of practical tests by the civil service commission should be widely extended. For positions in which the incumbent is not required to express himself in writing in the actual performance of his duties the practical test may supplant the written examination and

for positions in which it is practicable to supplement the written examination with a practical test this should be done. The high cost of practical tests is more apparent than real; when the cost of all the elements of a written examination are carefully computed it is found that written examinations are more expensive than practical tests.

ORAL AND NON-ASSEMBLED EXAMINATIONS.

Oral and non-assembled tests should not be recommended by the examining division unless the need for such a test is most imperative. Both are regarded by the general public with suspicion and both present problems of administration rendering it extremely difficult for the commission to disarm this suspicion. When such tests are ordered by the commission the examining division should spare no effort to safeguard the examination from every element endangering its success, which human ingenuity can devise. The recommendation to the commission of high class experts to conduct these tests will sometimes serve to allay suspicion to some extent; the formulation of definite standards of rating in oral tests will tend to serve to maintain the integrity of these tests; the preserving of a complete record of the reasons given by each examiner in support of his rating in each case will be found useful in defending the ratings when appeals for re-rating are presented.

SUBSTITUTES. When the commission has developed an efficient system for the qualitative rating of the experience of applicants the principal need for oral and non-assembled tests will be removed. When the experience rating grades on a competitive scale not only the quantity of each applicant's experience but also the quality of that experience, —whether it was with an important organization or with an unimportant concern; whether it was eminently successful or merely satisfactory or even less; whether the applicant is strongly recommended by his former employers for his personality, his force and his influence upon the public and upon his subordinates or has been found neutral or lacking in these qualities,—then there will be little further need of attempt-

ing to ascertain by means of a brief oral interview of ten or fifteen minutes, in which the candidate frequently fails to disclose to the examiners his true personality, what can be much better determined by the examiners' qualitative analysis of the applicant's life history.

Similarly, since an examination consisting of a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the applicants' experience is non-assembled in nature there will be no further need in many cases of supplementing such a qualitative and quantitative analysis of experience by the requirement of the submission of a thesis, regarding the actual authorship of which the outside public may be sceptical in some cases. For the maintenance of the integrity and success of civil service examinations it is not only necessary that they be in fact honestly and fairly conducted in every detail but it is equally important that they be above every iota of suspicion which cannot be conclusively overcome by the civil service commission.

EXPERIENCE RATING. The subject of experience was introduced into the civil service examining machinery to supplement the candidate's performance in the written test by giving him credits for such occupation or training in actual work tending to indicate the applicant's fitness for the position which he seeks as he may have enjoyed in a school or college or by actually following some trade or vocation.[5] Such experience cannot be successfully rated on a mathematical scale in the manner in which other subjects of an examination are rated. If a definite number of points are assigned to each element of the applicant's experience the result will not be satisfactory. In many cases such a system of rating will result in the appointment of older men having a longer experience to positions which younger men should fill, both in the interests of the city and of the candidates. ✓

FACTORS. The experience of each candidate should be factored into such factors as indirect experience including

(5) New York Municipal Civil Service Commission. *Third Annual Report*, 1885.

such elements as the applicant's professional training, unrelated experience such as employment in occupations not tending to qualify for the position sought, related experience such as employment in occupations tending to qualify for the position sought and direct experience consisting of previous experience in the kind of work which the applicant is seeking.

After being factored the papers of the candidates should be divided into groups and the same percentage assigned to the papers of each group. Only in this manner can the experience papers be effectively rated on a competitive scale with the result that the examiner places a value upon the entire factored experience of each applicant instead of on the minute component elements of the experience without consideration of their relative importance. The city as the prospective employer of the applicant is interested in the finished product which is represented by the life history of each applicant and not in the component elements of the applicant's training and experience, many of which may have failed to produce the results which might reasonably have been expected from them.

QUALITATIVE RATING. In addition to insisting upon the group rating of factored experience insistence should also be placed upon the qualitative rating of such experience in the case of all positions of importance. Although it is probably an exaggeration to state that the person who succeeds in obtaining the largest number of important positions and in remaining in each until he is dismissed will probably receive the highest rating under the present system for the quantitative rating of experience in civil service examinations it is undoubtedly true that if there is no dismissal in the applicant's record he will undoubtedly receive a very high rating. The distinction between a dismissal on account of unsatisfactory work and a resignation to better one's condition is frequently a psychological distinction rendering discrimination very difficult. That such a system of rating is inefficient and unsatisfactory is self-evident.

To guard against this defect in experience rating the paper of each applicant should first be given a tentative rating by the examiners. Inquiries should next be addressed by the examiners or under the direction of the assistant chief examiner in charge of rating to each of the applicant's principal former employers to verify the applicant's statements regarding his employment and to obtain an opinion regarding the quality of his work. When the former employers reside in the city or in its vicinity this information should preferably be obtained by means of actual field investigation. The tentative rating assigned to each experience paper should be fixed as the final rating unless as the result of the field investigation and for reasons submitted to the chief examiner in a written report the examiners should recommend its reduction because of the unsatisfactory quality of the applicant's experience.

Since the careful valuation of what a man has done in the past is the best possible criterion by which to judge his probable future ability the qualitative rating of experience will undoubtedly be considered a more scientific, a more accurate, a fairer and a safer means of judging an applicant's personality, force and influence upon subordinates and the public than can be obtained in an oral test of ten or fifteen minutes.

LIBRARY. Under modern conditions every efficient organization requires an efficient working library. The examining division should be provided with a working library in charge of a competent librarian. This library should contain at least two standard reference books on the work of each municipal department⁶. It should contain for the use

(6) *Fire Extinguishment*—Crocker, Fire Prevention; Kenlon, Fire and Fire Fighters. *Fire Prevention*—Crosby, Handbook; Freitag, Fire Prevention. *Police*—Fosdick, European Police systems; Fuld, Police Administration. *Health, Diseases*—Billings, Communicable Diseases; Rosenau, Preventive Medicine. *Health and Child Hygiene*—Baker, Child Hygiene; Mangold, Child Welfare. *Health, Food Inspection*—Leach, Food Inspection; Vacher, Inspector's Handbook. *Street Cleaning*—Dunphe, Street Cleaning; Stearns, Work of Department. *Tenement House*—Price, Tenement House Inspector; Veiller, Housing Reform. *Water Supply*—Brush, Maintenance of System; Weston, Waterworks Handbook. *Charities*—Devine, Principles of Relief; Richmond, Social Diagnosis. *Hospitals*—New York, Committee on Inquiry, 1913; Hornsby, Modern Hospital.

of the examiners questions used by the civil service examining boards in this country and by other examining boards in this country. These questions may be obtained by the librarian by means of the exchange of the commission's own specimen questions which should be published and distributed at regular intervals each year. The library should contain the annual reports and the printed regulations of each department of the city government.

The library should contain a digest of the most important decisions of the state courts in civil service cases, prepared either by the librarian or by a member of the examining staff who is a lawyer by profession. Each examiner should also be required to prepare and file in this library a report giving his constructive criticisms for the improvement of each examination which he has rated, after the rating of the examination has been completed by him. These reports will serve as a means of enabling the examiner assigned to prepare the next examination for this position to correct defects discovered in the preceding examination and will result in a continual gradual improvement of the commission's examining methods as a result of this experience.

SERVICE INSTRUCTION. No civil service examiner can perform the highly exacting duties of this specialized position efficiently for a long period of time unless he is assisted by means of service instruction. The examiner who understands most thoroughly the work of the departments whose personnel he is selecting will be most efficient in the performances of his duties. These are the cardinal principles upon which a system of service instruction for examiners should be based. One Saturday of each month may be devoted to service instruction.

The morning may be devoted to a conference of the examiners at which difficult problems of rating and other perplexities are discussed with the chief examiner and his assistants. At this monthly conference one examiner should also be required to prepare a paper on a subject previously assigned to him and the other examiners should be requested

to discuss this paper. Arrangements for an inexpensive departmental luncheon at which the commissioners are present, will serve to develop a true spirit of good fellowship among the members of the staff. An expert in the employ of the city should be invited to attend this luncheon as the guest of the examining board and to deliver a brief address on the work of his department which may be followed by a discussion by the members of the examining staff. The afternoon may be devoted to a visit to one of the institutions of the city to enable the examiners to study at first hand the particular activity which is being carried on in that institution and the personnel needs of the institution. Such a Saturday afternoon trip will in addition to possessing educational value also possesses recreational value, especially if summer arrangements are made to have this trip include a refreshing boat ride.

Employees engaged in such highly concentrated intellectual activities as civil service examiners should also be afforded opportunities for healthful relaxation such as may be obtained by light gymnastics, dancing and swimming in one of the buildings under the control of the city in the vicinity of the Municipal Building⁷. The planning of such recreational activities would greatly increase the working efficiency and reduce the time lost by reason of sickness by the members of the examining staff. Time-off under suitable regulations should also be granted to examiners desiring to take university courses of instruction directly correlated to their work and directly tending to increase their working efficiency.

CHAPTER THREE

The Chief Examiner

Progress of Examinations. Each examination consists of a large number of successive stages,—the preparation of the conditions of the examination, the receipt of applications, the experience rating, the medical examination, the

(7) Recreation for Office Women. *American Physical Education Review*, February, 1916

written examination, the rating of the written papers, the practical test, the oral test, the compilation of the eligible list, the character investigation and the promulgation of the eligible list. If several days are lost between the completion of each of these stages and the commencement of the next stage of the examination the promulgation of the eligible list will be considerably delayed. To avoid such unnecessary delay each employee of the commission should be required to report to a progress clerk in the office of the chief examiner, before the close of business each day, on forms provided for that purpose the completion of any stage of the examination for which that employee is responsible.

Forms calling attention to the completion of one stage of each of these examinations should be prepared by the progress clerk and placed on the desk of the chief examiner before the beginning of business on the following day. When these forms have been filled out and signed by the chief examiner at the commencement of the next day's business and have been distributed among the proper employees they serve as assignments and directions to proceed with the next stage of each examination without any delay. In the aggregate it is believed that this system will result in the saving of several weeks in the time required for the promulgation of the average eligible list.

Control of Salaries. The present system under which the salaries of all positions in the municipal service are fixed upon the recommendation of the Bureau of Personal Service of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, an independent city department, is very unsatisfactory from the point of view of practical civil service administration. The present practice of that department in regarding salaries which have once been fixed by it as not subject to fluctuation renders this system even less workable. The civil service commission which is charged by law with the duty of establishing eligible lists of persons competent to perform the various duties required of municipal employees⁸ can-

(8) State of New York, Laws of 1909, chapter 15, section 14.
Consolidated Laws, chapter 7, section 4.

not successfully fulfill this function if the salary offered by the city is insufficient to attract competent candidates. The entire spirit of the merit system may be defeated by this device.

A personal acquaintance of the appointing officer may be induced to accept a position at less than its fair market value by the promise of a liberal increase in compensation at an early date or by the promise of additional compensation from a private source. Even if there is no such promise on the part of the appointing officer the principle of the merit system is violated when the civil service commission is unable, because of the inadequate salary offered for the position, to obtain eligibles as the result of competition and the selection of an inferior employee at the low salary offered is left to the appointing officer. With its wealth of experience gained as the result of holding examinations for all positions for a long period of years the civil service commission is better able to fix salaries than any other department of the municipal government can possibly hope to be and the results of its continuing experience from day to day enables it to adjust these salaries to the market fluctuations of labor in the various fields of employment, as it should be borne in mind that the compensation rates of labor fluctuate in the same manner as the commodity rates of staple products.

Promotion Examinations. For the development of the system of promotion examinations three principles must be borne in mind,—simplification, standardization and fairness. It is believed that the efficiency of the promotion system would be increased by the simplification of the promotion examinations. For promotion from the labor class to the competitive class the written examination should be supplemented by a practical test wherever it is possible to do so. Of even greater importance is it that the written examination should be within the intellectual range of the candidates. The questions should be made up of simple Anglo-Saxon words and should be susceptible of short direct an-

swers indicating to the examiner whether the candidate knows the principle involved in the question or not. Questions requiring of the candidate an ability to describe processes, to express opinions on methods and procedures, and to define terms are not suitable for examinations of this grade. They are beyond the comprehension of the candidates and an ability to answer them is not required for the efficient performance of duties which are manual or sub-clerical in character, such as the duties of a messenger, a foreman, a stationary engineer or the like.

It is also likely that by reducing the number of question papers in the clerical promotion examinations from four to two, without narrowing the content or scope of the examination many economies of administration could be effected. The questions on the duties of co-operating departments and on business methods may be combined in a single General Paper in the morning session and the questions on the duties of the department in which the candidate is employed and the writing of a letter may be combined in a single Duties Paper in the afternoon. In the case of the promotion examinations in the Fire Department, in which many of the most capable officers are deficient in literary ability it would be desirable to institute additional practical tests. For promotion to the rank of engineer of steamer the candidates are given a practical test in the operation of the steamer or engine. It may be found practicable to test the executive ability of applicants for the position of captain by having the company which has been trained by each candidate perform its standard fire-fighting evolutions under the direction of the candidate and rate his executive ability on this test. Such practical tests and the formation of practical duties papers in promotion examinations tend to increase the efficiency of all municipal employees. This is a very valuable by-product of an efficient system of promotion examinations.

Standardisation. The standardization of promotion examinations would render it possible for each applicant to

know in advance the ground which his promotion examination will cover. This would enable each candidate to make intelligent and adequate preparation for his examination and would eliminate every excuse for seeking private or secret information. The publication and wide distribution of sample questions of all promotion examinations in which a large number of candidates compete would be of great assistance in connection with such standardization. Nor would such standardization result in stagnation. The commission would be at liberty to change or improve the plan of examination at any time; the standard examination would be followed only until changed by the commission, of which due notice would be given.

In the promotion examinations in the uniformed forces of the police and fire departments there is urgent need for the standardization of the rating of seniority. At present the method of rating is determined by the civil service commission in advance of each examination. The result is that since the method of rating is frequently changed candidates are often injuriously affected by the liberal seniority rating of one promotion examination which favors the older men and then injured again in the next examination which they take for promotion to the same rank by the illiberal seniority rating which favors the younger men. In the case of employees who definitely make the city service their life work as do the policemen and firemen such injustice due to a lack of standardization is a serious matter.

Fairness. To insure to each candidate a fair and equal chance in a promotion examination the system of rating seniority and the keeping of service records should be improved. No credit should be given for seniority for a longer period than is required to enable the average employee in the lower rank to qualify by experience for the next higher rank. More credit for employees is a condition seriously detrimental to efficiency. Longer service in a lower rank gives the incumbent added experience which should be

reflected in his ability to answer the technical questions of the examination, if he has benefited by his additional experience.

In the case of most promotion examinations for important positions an employee is designated by the head of department to perform the duties of the higher position pending the holding and rating of the promotion examination. Such a temporary assignment is necessary because the work of the department must be carried on during this interval. This temporary incumbent enjoys, however, not only the added knowledge and experience gained by this temporary assignment but in addition he is usually given a higher service rating for the satisfactory performance of the duties of this higher position and frequently he is also an old employee who has a high rating for seniority.

Coupled to these advantages is the circumstance that the civil service commission in promotion examinations of this kind frequently asks questions relating to budgetary and personnel problems with which no candidate other than the temporary incumbent can possibly be thoroughly acquainted. Under such a system of promotion examinations for the higher positions the entire competitive principle is destroyed and the examination becomes a mere formality to give legal sanction to the designation made by the appointing officer to the higher position. In all promotion examinations no special credit should be given on the service record for the efficient performance of the duties of a superior position held pending a promotion examination and no questions should be asked which are peculiarly within the knowledge of the temporary incumbent. Such a revision of examination practice is absolutely necessary to obtain and retain the confidence of the employees in promotion examinations for important administrative positions.

Service Records. The system of service records which has recently been introduced by the civil service commission is based upon sound scientific principles [9] and is undoubt-

(9) New York Municipal Civil Service Commission, *Regulation XIII*.

edly the most elaborate system of service records in force at the present day. If this system is to be continued the examiners of the commission assigned to act as official advisers to departmental personnel boards should be required to formulate definite standards for the guidance of the rating officers in the case of each class of employees. This will involve a tremendous amount of detail work but it is absolutely essential under the present system. The danger of permitting a large number of rating officers to grade employees above and below standard when that standard has never been definitely fixed and varies in each rating unit is apparent to everyone.

No private organization would attempt to administer such an elaborate and extensive service record system as that which is being used in the City of New York at present. Most private organizations confine their service record systems to the recording of exceptionally meritorious conduct and the recording of acts of delinquency at such times as they may occur in the official career of each employee. This is believed adequate and sufficient for purposes of advancement in salary, promotion in rank, lay-off and dismissal. It seems to be the consensus of opinion that it is unnecessary and wasteful to rate each employee at regular intervals of three or four times a year when his services are merely normal and satisfactory. [10] If it is believed that the public service differs so much from private employment in this respect and requires the rating of all employees at regular intervals of three or four times a year it is absolutely essential that the standards of satisfactory service in each branch of the service be accurately defined for the use of rating officers. These standards of satisfactory service are the norms to which all other ratings are referred and an undefined norm is meaningless and dangerous.

To be susceptible of successful administration, an elaborate service record-system must record not only the quality and the quantity of each employee's work but must pay at-

(10) Discussion on Efficiency Records, National Assembly of Civil Service Commissions, 1916, page 18.

tention also to his adaptability,—his fitness for higher work. [11] It must galvanize the interest of the employees in the service record system by making provision for the publicity of the records, for the consideration of appeals from the ratings and for tangible rewards for high efficiency ratings. Letters of commendation and letters of reprimand based on the service records are efficient methods of galvanizing interest in the system [12]; days off and additional days of vacation for high service ratings are even more effective. [13] [14]

Planning of Work. The work of the examining division should be carefully planned for each month of the ensuing year at the time when the annual budget is prepared in September of the preceding year. Such a systematic and careful planning is conducive to the efficient administration of the examining division. It will prevent the examiners from dawdling over their work in the idle fear that the services of some of them may be temporarily dispensed with owing to a shortage of papers to be rated and will lessen the necessity of speeding the work of the examiners because of pressure of business. It will, by a judicious distribution of the work of the examining division over a cycle of four years, during which the life of an eligible list may be permitted to continue under the law, [15] prevent the occurrence of lean years and reduce to a minimum the likelihood of some years being excessively busy.

It is not to be expected that such a prearranged calendar will be followed out throughout the year. Many examinations must be ordered each year which it is impossible to foresee at budget-making time. These examinations are

(11) Public Office From a Business Point of View. *Hopper*, page 10.

(12) Efficiency Records in the Civil Service. *American City*, March, 1911.

(13) Efficiency Records for Department Stores. *Dry Goods Guide*, March, 1915.

(14) Efficiency Records for Policemen. *National Municipal Review*, January, 1916.

(15) State of New York, Laws of 1909, chapter 15, section 14, *Consolidated Laws*, chapter 7, section 14.

called for newly created positions, for unexpected increases in personnel and to replenish eligible lists which have been unexpectedly exhausted. Each of these extraordinary needs may be fitted into the calendar of the examining division's work, either in spaces reserved for such cases or by transferring to new dates, other examinations on the calendar.

Specialization. There is need for greater specialization of work in the examining division. Such supecialization should be informal rather than formal. It should be developed by the most careful and discriminating use of the power of assignment by the chief examiner, by a study of the individual capability and personal preference of each member of the examining staff and by service instruction, rather than by formal designation. The adoption by the commission of a classification based upon scientific principles will be an aid to such specialization as well as to the proper development of the promotion system.

The chief examiner should not hesitate to deviate from such specialized assignments whenever in his judgment the interests of the service will be benefited thereby. Too much formal specialization among the examiners is dangerous, both because it will detract from the breadth of the examinations and because it will localize too narrowly the activities of the division, with respect to each class of examination.

CHAPTER THREE

The Chief Examiner

Importance of Position. The chief examiner is more than the principal subordinate of the Civil Service Commission. He is more than the chief executive of the examining division. He is more than the guardian and defender of the merit system in the City of New York. He is in charge of the employment department of a municipal corporation employing more than fifty thousand men and women¹ ranging from cleaners to sanitary superintendents

(1) New York Municipal Service Commission, Thirty-eighth Annual Report, page 88.

and from office boys to chief engineers. The efficient performance of the duties of a position of such great importance requires qualifications of an unusually high order.

Qualifications. The chief examiner should be a man of large vision without however being a visionary. He should be a graduate in arts or in science of a well-recognized college, since it is almost impossible for a man to possess the breadth of view required for this position unless he has enjoyed the broad general culture of a college education. He should have demonstrated in his college course such evidence of superior scholarship as is indicated by election to Phi Beta Kappa. His college education should be supplemented by post-graduate research work leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in a university of recognized standing. Because of the many legal problems arising in the daily routine of the chief examiner's duties he should also be a graduate in law and a member of the Bar. To be able to understand and interpret intelligently the problems connected with the administration of medical and physical examinations he should possess at least so much knowledge of the theory and practice of medical examinations as may be obtained by pursuing courses in anthropometry and physical diagnosis such as constitute a minor course for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in a university of recognized standing.

Above all else he must possess the widest possible knowledge of the principles and the details of the city government. This knowledge should be both theoretical and practical. The theoretical knowledge should be such as may be obtained by pursuing a major course in the principles of municipal government as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; the practical knowledge should be such as may be obtained by an intensive study of one branch of municipal administration and by a thorough field study of all the branches of the city government. He should possess such a standing in the field of municipal administration, because of his research work in this field

and irrespective of his official position that he will be requested to prepare papers and write reviews for periodicals of recognized standing in this field. He should possess such a standing in the field of employment management that his advice and assistance will be sought by executives of private corporations as well as by municipal officials.² Such requests will be of distinct advantage to the Civil Service Commission, not only in dignifying its chief examiner but more particularly in compelling him to keep himself thoroughly informed of all progress in the field of municipal administration and of employment management throughout the country.

Personally the chief examiner should be a man of undoubted integrity, whose every act is not only morally sound but entirely above suspicion. He should be unmarried, or if married, should possess sufficient independent means to make himself at least semi-independent of his official salary as a means of support.³

Relation to Commission. The chief examiner may assume one of three attitudes in his relation to the Commission. He may be a fawn, a straight-back or a stabilizer. The fawning chief examiner is the most dangerous type for the welfare of the Civil Service Commission. Such a chief examiner hails with delight and approval every suggestion of the Civil Service Commission, whether it is in the interests of sound civil service administration or not. With a view to currying favor with the Commission he carries out without comment every order of the Commission and lets the inevitable unfavorable comment resulting from the inauguration of unsound methods fall with full weight upon the Commission which instituted those methods.

The chief examiner may be a straight-backed and straight-laced individual who finds improper motives in every act of the Commission and deems it his duty to point out defects and improprieties in a large number of resolu-

(2) Salaries and Promotion, Survey, 1912, page 125.

(3) Most of the qualifications enumerated in this section were possessed by the late chief examiner of the New York Municipal Civil Service Commission.

tions of the Commission. Such a chief examiner is the most uncomfortable for the peace of mind of the Civil Service Commissioners. He is an endless source of friction and annoyance to the Civil Service Commissioners, to the candidates and to the appointing officers. Well-intentioned though he may be, he will tend to throw the entire civil service, if not indeed the entire municipal government into discord and confusion.

The ideal chief examiner will with breadth of vision scrutinize every act of the Civil Service Commission, pointing out to the Commission in a respectful manner any action by the Commission which may in his opinion be contrary to the principles of the merit system, which may be dangerous in practice or which may lead to unfavorable comment or criticism. He will act as the defender of the principles of the merit system with all his power to the full extent that his position as the principal subordinate of the Commission will allow. He will however not only point out these dangers to the Commission but he will also endeavor to point out remedies for each danger. He will prepare recommendations to carry out the wishes of the Commission in a manner consistent with sound civil service administration. He will be a stabilizer and not an obstructionist.

Relation to Departments. In his relations with departments the chief examiner will act as an expert adviser in matters of personnel. He will endeavor by his advice, by his official reports and by his routine administration of his office to expedite the work of the city departments in every possible way. He will interfere as little as possible with the internal affairs of the departments and with the administrative discretion of the appointing officers. He will endeavor to maintain cordial personal relations with appointing officers with a view to facilitating the transaction of official business. He will extend to appointing officers every courtesy consistent with the proper administration of the civil service law, and if requested to do so he will give them such assistance in matters of personnel outside of

office hours as he may be requested to furnish, even if such requests are clearly extra-legal, provided that they are not illegal.

In all of his relations with appointing officers he will however always maintain that position of dignified superiority which a superior officer should at all times maintain toward an officer subordinate in rank. He should be sincerely cordial without being familiar. He should be approachable at all times without being a "mixer." He should act as a friend and a personal adviser without losing sight of the fact that he is the chief examiner of the Civil Service Commission.

Office Management. In the management of his office the chief examiner should at all times blend democracy with officer-like dignity and efficiency. His examiners should be made to feel that they have the privilege of consulting him at any time on any subject, but should be encouraged to obtain from the assistant chief examiners and from the chief examiner's private secretary such routine information as they may be able to give them. Appointing officers should be permitted to confer with him at any time with a minimum of formality. Any employee in the municipal service should also have the privilege of talking to the chief examiner whenever he desires to do so, but in the interest of efficient office administration some limitation must be placed upon this privilege, since otherwise a large amount of the chief examiner's time will be wasted by the according of this privilege. Such limitation may be made by requiring that city employees desiring routine information must obtain it from the chief examiner's secretary and that any city employee who wishes to speak to the chief examiner personally must either see him during an office hour reserved for that purpose each week or make an appointment to see him.

However much we may admire the simple democracy of a chief examiner who may be seen by anybody at any time the following of such a practice is neither in accord

with the principles of efficient office administration nor with the importance and dignity of the chief examiner's position. With due regard for the interests of the city, the chief examiner should not fritter away his own time in attending to matters to which his private secretary can attend, nor should he lower the dignity of his position by mixing too freely with the employees in the service. He is an officer of the highest rank and familiarity between officers and subordinates is never to be encouraged. Cordiality may be developed by an officer's manner and by an officer's acts without laying himself open to the charge of undue familiarity.

Conclusion. It is conceded by all students of municipal government that police work is always unpopular. No one likes the hand that jails him. Whenever the police perform a police function they incur the enmity of one of the two conflicting interests which they separate⁴. Civil service work is from many points of view inter-departmental municipal police work. On this account it is not at all strange that it is far from popular. Appointing officers adopt the same attitude toward the civil service administration that the general public maintains toward the tax collector. As the citizen who is otherwise honest boasts of his ability in outwitting the tax collector, so the appointing officer otherwise upright feels no compunction in defeating the objects of the civil service law in so far as the Civil Service Commissioner and the chief examiner will permit.

As long as this attitude toward the civil service administration is prevalent the chief examiner cannot hope to be a popular man while he is performing the duties of his position conscientiously. He must get his reward from his own feeling of satisfaction over duties efficiently and conscientiously performed. He must be reconciled to the fact that his official position will not permit him to cultivate friendship by extending little courtesies which in other

(4) Difficulty of police Administration, Newark Evening News, October 14, 1911.

walks of life are regarded as proper, but which in civil service administration are highly improper. He must realize that he is performing a difficult administrative service as vitally necessary for the maintenance of an efficient municipal government as is the police service for the maintenance of the city's peace and quiet.

The chief examiner must be prepared to realize that his position is a thankless job, a position which is not conducive to popularity and one which may well lead to the fate of Aristides who was banished from Athens because the people were tired of hearing him everywhere called "The Just."⁵ But if such a fate should be the lot of the chief examiner it is certain that like Aristides he will be recalled from his banishment as soon as the people realize by anti-thesis the value of the services of a just, thoroughly competent and efficient chief examiner.

(5) Plutarch's Lives, Clough, page 233.

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